

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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P R 111340Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9002

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 1720

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PO, FI

SUBJ: MEETING OF SOCIALIST LEADERS ON PORTUGAL: FINNISH SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC VIEWS ON PORTUGAL

REF: STATE 188416

1. SUMMARY: SDP CHAIRMAN SORSA CONSIDERS PRESENT
SITUATION IN PORTUGAL VERY SERIOUS AND LIKELY TO BECOME
WORSE. SORSA REACHED THIS CONCLUSION AFTER DISCUSSIONS
WITH SOARES IN STOCKHOLM. ACCORDING TO SORSA, SOARES
EXTREMELY PESSIMISTIC AND FEARFUL THAT CUNHAL'S ADVOCACY
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FOR IMMEDIATE COMPLETE COMMUNIST TAKEOVER WILL LEAD

TO LARGE-SCALE CIVIL DISORDERS AND ARMED CONFLICT IN
PORTUGAL. END SUMMARY.

2. PORTUGAL WAS ONE OF THE MAIN TOPICS DURING STRAIGHT-
FORWARD LONG WORKING LUNCHEON I HAD WITH CHAIRMAN OF
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SDP) AND RECENT PRIME MINISTER
KALEVI SORSA ON AUGUST 7 (SEPARATE MEMCON SENT MOST
ADDRESSEES).

3. I ESPECIALLY ASKED SORSA ABOUT THE STOCKHOLM
MEETING OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERS AND WHAT IF
ANYTHING HAD BEEN ACTUALLY DECIDED CONCERNING ACTION
IN SUPPORT OF THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS. ACCORDING TO
SORSA NO COMMITMENTS OR PLEDGES OF POLITICAL OR
FINANCIAL SUPPORT WERE MADE BY ANY OF THE PARTICIPANTS.
SORSA SAID THAT IT WAS LEFT UP TO THE SMALL WORKING
GROUP COMPOSED OF PALME, BRANDT, MITTERAND AND CALLAGHAN
TO COME UP WITH SOME PROPOSALS FOR ACTION. SORSA HAD
NO IDEA, HOWEVER, WHEN THE WORKING GROUP WOULD BE
READY TO MAKE ANY PROPOSALS. HE POINTED OUT ALSO THAT
THE STOCKHOLM MEETING WAS INFORMAL ONE ARRANGED BY
PALME AND NOT, AS USUAL, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL.

4. SORSA SAID THAT SOARES HAD BEEN MUCH MORE
PESSIMISTIC ABOUT SITUATION IN PORTUGAL DURING
HIS PRIVATE TALKS WITH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERS
THAN IN STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS. SORSA HAD GAINED
IMPRESSION THAT SOARES WAS EXPECTING INCREASED
DIFFICULTIES IN PORTUGAL. SOARES' SCENARIO WAS
THAT THERE WOULD BE AN ESCALATION OF TROUBLE,
STARTING FIRST IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD, THEN MOVING
MORE AND MORE INTO POLITICAL ARENA, AND FINALLY
CULMINATING IN EITHER VERY TIGHT MILITARY CONTROL
OR OUTRIGHT CIVIL DISORDER AND ARMED CONFLICT.

5. SORSA SAID THAT HE AND FINNISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS
ALSO VERY CONCERNED ABOUT PRESENT GOVERNMENTAL SITUA-
TION IN PORTUGAL, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS DANGEROUS.
HE SAID THAT GONCALVES RECENTLY HAD DESPERATELY TRIED
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TO PERSUADE PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS OTHER THAN SOARES
TO COME INTO THE GOVERNMENT, GOING AS FAR AS OFFERING
SOCIALISTS 10 SEATS WHICH WOULD HAVE CONSTITUTED A
MAJORITY. SORSA WAS OBVIOUSLY PLEASED THAT PORTUGUESE
SOCIALISTS HAD REFUSED GONCALVES' OFFER AND STUCK BY
SOARES.

6. SORSA FELT ALTHOUGH THE COMMUNISTS IN PORTUGAL

ENJOYED ONLY VERY LIMITED PUBLIC SUPPORT, THE DANGER LIE IN FACT THAT COMMUNISTS WELL ORGANIZED AND HAD CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT WITHIN AFM. ANOTHER DANGER, ACCORDING TO SORSA, WAS FACT THAT WHEREAS SOME COMMUNIST LEADERS IN PORTUGAL WERE ARGUING FOR A GO-SLOW POLICY, HAVING SETBACKS IN CHILE IN MIND, PCP LEADER CUNHAL WAS ADVOCATING THAT COMMUNISTS SHOULD TRY TO GAIN IMMEDIATE COMPLETE CONTROL. CUNHAL'S POSITION SUPPOSEDLY BASED ON HIS OPINION THAT ITALIAN COMMUNISTS COULD HAVE TAKEN OVER RIGHT AFTER WORLD WAR II IF TOGLIATTI HAD BEEN MORE DECISIVE AND DARING.

7. SORSA SAID THAT HE HAD ALSO HEARD REPORTS OF SOVIET FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO PORTUGUESE COMMUNISTS, BUT THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO REMAIN LIMITED SINCE SOVIETS COULD NOT AFFORD POLITICAL RISK OF BEING CLEARLY IDENTIFIED AS BANKERS OF PORTUGUESE COMMUNISTS.

8. COMMENT: THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT THAT FINNISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ARE SERIOUSLY WORRIED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL. HOW FAR THEY CAN GO IN OUTRIGHT SUPPORT OF SOARES AND PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS AT THIS TIME IS QUESTIONABLE, DUE TO FACT THAT DURING PRESENT CARETAKER GOVERNMENT PERIOD IN FINLAND-- WHICH WOULD LAST FOR SEVERAL MONTHS -- THEY HAVE LITTLE DIRECT POWER OVER FINNISH FOREIGN POLICY. THEY ARE ALSO RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN WHICH MAKES IT EVEN MORE DIFFICULT THAN USUAL FOR THEM TO TAKE POSITION WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED AS ANTI-SOVIET OR ANTI-COMMUNIST. NEVERTHELESS, WHEN AND IF PALME WORKING GROUP COMES UP WITH

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ACTION PROGRAM, FINNISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS PROBABLY WILL TRY JOIN IN DISPLAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH SOARES.
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